

Energy Flow and Pyramids of Numbers

kilograms	biomass	webs	less	chains
	pyramid	ecosystem	producers	

Food chains and food webs show how energy is transferred through an ecosystem. They do not show how many plants or animals are involved. Food webs are made by putting food chains together.

A pyramid of numbers shows how many organisms are involved at each level. The producers are always at the bottom of the pyramid. If we estimate the weight of the organisms at each level, we can find the number of kilograms of food needed to feed the next higher level. This is called biomass. The greatest biomass is at the bottom of the pyramid. At each level, there is less energy available for use.